A SERMON AT THE FUNERAL OF Mrs. *ELIZABETH FISHER*,

Sister to the Honourable

Sir *WILLIAM DAWES*, Bar. D. D.

And Wife to the Reverend

Dr. *PETER FISHER*.

Preach'd at *Bennington* in *Hertfordshire*, *June* the 2d. 1698.

By *WILLIAM MILNER*,

[redacted] of *Shephall* in *Hertfordshire*.

LONDON:

Printed for *Thomas Speed*, at the Three *Crowns*, near the *Royal-Exchange* in *Corn-hill*. MDCLXXXXVIII.

A

SERMON

AT THE

INTERMENT

OF

MRS. ELIZABETH FISHER,

WIFE OF

DR. JAMES FISHER.

To the Honourable the

Lady *ELIZABETH BENET*,

WIFE OF

Sir *Richard Benet*, Bar.

Of *Babram* in *Cambridgſhire.*

Madam,

THE honeſt Plainneſs, and Truth of the following Diſcourſe found ſuch acceptance with the Relations and Friends, of that Excellent Perſon, whoſe immature and much lamented Death, was the ſad Occaſion of it, That They have prevail'd with me to make it more publick, than I at firſt intended: Believing it would be as acceptable to your Ladyſhip in the Reading, as it was to them, when they heard it. I was the more willing to comply with their Deſire, not only that it might be a publick acknowledment, of my great Obligation to Your Family, and to Your Ladyſhip in particular, for Your many great and laſting Favours towards me, but becauſe I am ſenſible the Subject is ſuch, as will recommend it to Your Favour. Your Ladyſhip was a Witneſs, and a Lover of the many great Vertues of Your Dear and Excellent Friend. Her affectionate

care

care and concern for Your Good, the Sincerity of her Friendſhip, the Piety and Prudence of her Counſels, the great Uſefulneſs and Advantage of her Example, at ſuch a time, when you ſtood moſt in need of it, by the otherwiſe irreparable loſs, of Your truly Pious, and moſt tenderly Affectionate Mother, had deſervedly endear'd her to You: and I perſwade my ſelf, juſt Allowances being made, for the difference of Your reſpective Condition and Circumſtances, You will always imitate, whatſoever was Excellent, Amiable, and Praiſeworthy in Her. This will recommend You to the eſteem of ſuch as are Wiſe and Good: Hereby You will be an Ornament to Your Own Family, and add a Luſtre to That, into which, by the ſucceſsful Care, and Endeavours of Your Dear deceaſed Friend, You are ſo happily tranſplanted. If what I now offer, may contribute any thing towards ſo great and good an End, it will be the greateſt acceſſion, to all the other Favours You have ſhewn to,

Madam,

Your Ladyſhips Moſt Obliged,

and Obedient Servant.

W. MILNER.

A SERMON AT THE FUNERAL OF Mrs. ELIZABETH FISHER.

Rev. 14. 13.

I heard a voice from Heaven, saying unto me. Write, Blessed are Dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

WHosoever shall consider these words in their more immediate Connexion with the foregonig parts of the Chapter, will see great reason to conclude, that in their Original and Primary intention they were deliver'd by the Blessed Spirit, and by him commanded to be written for the support and comfort of the Church, under that severe Persecution which should befall it. But since the Wisdom and Piety of our own Church, has thought fit to insert the Words into her Office for the Burial of the Dead, I shall at this time consider them in a greater Latitude, as of general use to the Church of God in all Ages, and under all circumstances, holding forth this great and com-

comfortable Truth; *Viz.* That all Good Christians immediately upon their dissolution, or departure out of this Life are in a blessed or happy condition. A Truth which deserves our more serious and attentive regard and meditation, because deliver'd by an audible Voice from Heaven, expressly commanded to be written, and confirm'd by the solemn asseveration of the Spirit. And therefore for the more distinct and proffitable handling of the Words, give me leave to exercise your Meditation and Patience upon these following things.

1. Let me inquire what it is to die in the Lord?

2. In what respect, or upon what accounts such as die in the Lord, are pronounc'd Blessed.

3. Let me touch at the time from whence their Blessedness commences: And then I shall apply the whole for the directing our Practice, and in particular to temper, and alleviate our grief upon the Mournful occasion of our present meeting together. And,

1. Let me inquire what it is to die in the Lord: And this will be dispatch'd in a few words. Now tho' this Phrase to die in the Lord, if consider'd with respect to the particular occasion of the Words, may signifie only to die for the Lord, *i. e.* for his sake, and in his cause, and so may relate to the case of such who suffer Martyrdom for the sake of Christ; Yet, I doubt not, but in the more general and ultimate sense of the Words, to die in the Lord, is the same, as to die in the Faith, and Fear, and Favour of God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. To die Christians: Christians both in Faith and Practice, adhering to God through Jesus Christ, by an Uniform and Constant Obedience to his Will, and a stedfast Faith and Hope of Redemption and Salvation by him. For it to *be in Christ*, and *to be alive to God through Jesus Christ*, *and to live to him who died for us, and rose again, are forms*

of

of Speech denoting the ſincere Belief and Practice of Chriſtianity, and the Participation of the Grace and Priviledges of the Goſpel in conſequence of ſuch Faith and Practice, I think, their can be no reaſon to doubt, but that theſe Phraſes, of *Sleeping in Chriſt and Dying in the Lord*, muſt likewiſe be underſtood in the ſame ſenſe, ſo as to imply our Perſeverance in ſuch Belief and Practice to our lives end. And Bleſſed are they who thus die in the Lord; continuing ſtedfaſt, without wavering, even to the end, in all holy Faith, and Obedience. Which leads me to the Second thing I am to account for, *Viz.*

2. To inquire in what reſpect, and upon what accounts, they who die in the Lord are pronounc'd Bleſſed: Or in other words to point at the Nature of that Bleſſedneſs which Holy Souls enjoy in their ſtate of Separation from their Bodies. But before I enter upon this, permit me to premiſe a few things.

1. That as yet we are very much in the dark as to our future State: I do not mean as to the certainty of ſuch a State, for Life and Immortality is brought to light thro' the Goſpel. But we are left to uncertainties, as to the diſtinct nature, and compleat degrees and meaſures of its Happineſs. And,

2. We have juſt reaſon to believe, that the Bleſſedneſs of departed Holy Spirits in their State of Separation, is leſs perfect in Quality and Degree, than it will be at the Reſurrection, when their Souls and Bodies ſhall be reunited by the moſt intimate Vital Union: But nevertheleſs, there is enough reveal'd concerning their preſent Happineſs, to convince us, that 'tis very great, far beyond any of the tranſitory, mixt, periſhing Pleaſures of this Life; enough to engage good Men to aſpire and pant after it, at leaſt to make them neither afraid, nor unwilling to die. And,

3. *Laſtly*, I add, That whatſoever we know concern-

ing this matter is principally, if not wholly owing to Revelation: and therefore it becomes none of us, to pretend to be wise above what is written. We should not exercise our selves, with curious, perplex'd, and useless inquiries, but rest contented with what we find plainly deliver'd in Holy Scripture, striving always so to order our whole Conversations, as that we may be found worthy to be receiv'd, when we depart hence, into those *Mansions, our Blessed Lord is gone before to prepare for us.* These things being thus premis'd, let us proceed to consider wherein the Text has plac'd the Blessedness of departed Holy Spirits. Now this it tells us lies in these two things. They are Blessed;

1. Because they *rest from their Labours.*

2. *Because their works follow,* or accompany them into their future State. The meaning and importance of which things must be the subject of the following Discourse.

1. They are Blessed in that they *rest from their Labours. i. e.* They are compleatly deliver'd from all the Troubles and Sorrows, all the Evils and Calamities, Infirmities and Miseries of this frail, Mortal State: I say, all, which either have their Foundation in the very texture and constitution of the Human Body, or proceed from the Folly and Frenzie, the Envy or Malice of Others. In this Vale of Tears and Misery Good Men, as well as others, are liable to Pain and Sickness, to Difficulties and Dangers, to Poverty, Reproach and Persecution, and all the sad effects of their own infirm crazie Bodies, and the inordinate Appetites and Passions of others. Nay, the Sons of Violence too often make them the Marks of their Displeasure and Vengeance, for no other reason, but because their Works are Righteous. And is it not a blessed thing to be deliver'd from such a deplorable and wretched State? Why this is the happy state of such who die in the Lord.

They

They are ſafe out of the reach of all theſe their Enemies. No Smart or Anguiſh can afflict them: No Wrath or Malice overtake them. To allude to that of *Moſes* concerning the *Egyptians*, when good Men ſhall have once paſt through this Red-Sea, they may ſtand ſtill upon the Shore, and look back with Pleaſure and Triumph upon all theſe their Enemies, ſaying we ſhall ſee them again no more for ever. As *Job* has it, Chap. 3. v. 18. 19. *In the grave the Wicked ceaſe from troubling, and there the weary are at reſt; There the Priſoners reſt together, they hear not the voice of the Oppreſſor, the ſmall and great are there,* [upon the ſame level, none greater than other] *and the ſervant is free from his maſter.* So that the words of *Solomon*, if underſtood with reference to departed Saints are ſtrictly true. *That the day of a mans death, is better than the day of his birth:* The day of his Birth being the beginning of a life, attended with continual Care and Sorrow, the day of his Death, being his Birth-day into a Bleſſed Immortal Life of uninterrupted Peace and Pleaſure. This for the Firſt. Exod. 14. 13. Eccleſ. 7. 1.

2. The Second thing wherein the Text places the Bleſſedneſs of thoſe who die in the Lord is this; They are bleſſed becauſe their Works accompany, or follow them. By which we are to underſtand theſe Two things.

I. The Grateful and Pleaſant Remembrance.
II. The Glorious and happy Fruits and Effects, or the Reward of their Good Works follows them.

1. The Grateful Remembrance of their good Works follows them. Now that this is a real Foundation and Ground of Peace and Bleſſedneſs to Holy Spirits in their ſtate of ſeparation from their Bodies, may be reaſonably inferr'd from the Conſideration of our ſelves,

how it is with us here in our ſtate of Diſcipline and Trial. For if good Men reflecting upon the courſe of their paſt Lives, and finding that they have behav'd themſelves piouſly with regard to God, and Inoffenſively and Charitably towards Men; do from this Teſtimony of their Conſciences receive a very ſenſible and inward Pleaſure, a Pleaſure greater than the World can give, which none can comprehend but ſuch as have felt it: What an Unſpeakable, Tranſporting, Inconceiveable Pleaſure, may we reaſonably ſuppoſe will ſpring up in departed Holy Souls, when all the good Works of their whole Lives ſhall be had in remembrance, and ſet in order before them, and repreſented at one view with greater force and advantage than we can ſuppoſe they are in this Earthly State? How will ſuch Bleſſed Spirits, upon ſuch recollection even melt away, and be diſſolv'd and ſwallow'd up in the greateſt Tranſports and higheſt Extaſies of Complacency and Delight!

2. The Fruits and Effects, or Reward of their good Works accompanies or follows them into their future State. But Bleſſed God! What Tongue can deſcribe, what *Heart conceive the good things which thou haſt prepared for all thoſe* who Die in thy Fear and Favour! 'Tis impoſſible for us fully to repreſent the Happineſs and Glory of the Saints in their future State: yet, to excite our Love to God, and to quicken our deſires after the Enjoyment of Him, it can neither be uſeleſs, nor unſeaſonable to point at ſome few things which are the happy Effects and Reward of the Good Works of Holy Men in the other Life. And therefore,

1. Good Men are compleatly deliver'd from Sin, as well as Sorrow and Trouble. They are no longer liable to Temptation or Danger, from any of the Enemies of God's Glory and their own Salvation. Whilſt they are here

here upon Earth, the Devil and his Agents, lie in wait to Enſnare them, and even their own Fleſh, which encompaſſes them about, ſollicits them to a multitude of Sins and Follies. They daily *find a Law in their Members, warring againſt the Law of their Minds, the Fleſh luſting againſt the Spirit*, the Animal and Carnal, ſtrugling with the Rational and Spiritual Powers; which Conflict, is the ground and occaſion of much Dejection and Diſquietneſs of Soul, filling even good Men with many Miſgivings, and Fears, and Perplexities concerning their preſent Sincerity, and future Happineſs. How in the bitterneſs of their Souls do they lament their evil Propenſities and Inclinations, their Slips and Failings, their Miſtakes, and ſometimes more notorious Tranſgreſſions? They *find no reſt by reaſon of their* Spiritual *Enemies, and their Hearts too often fail them.* But it is not thus with the Dead, with them who Die in the Lord. *He that is once entred into his Reſt,* Heb. 4. 10. *ceaſes from his own Works*, the works of Sin and the Fleſh. Rom. 6. 7. *He that is dead is freed from Sin:* from the fear and danger, and poſſibility of offending God: No ſubtile malicious Serpent can inſinuate himſelf into the Paradiſe of Holy Souls; this Earth is the Scene of Satans Temptation, and the place of Tryal. Or, if we may ſuppoſe that the Evil Spirit ſhould creep in amongſt them; yet, he will find nothing in them, ſo as to fix a Temptation upon them: For being delivered from the burden of the Fleſh, from the *Body of this Death*, as the Apoſtle calls it, all thoſe ſparks of a corrupt Nature, which ſo eaſily took fire here, are for ever extinguiſh'd, that *Root of Bitterneſs* is pluck'd up, and can never ſpring again into any rebellious Inclinations or Actions: Now, how great a Happineſs this is, can be throughly underſtood by none but ſuch as have duly conſidered the Malignity and Demerit of Sin, or felt the Sad and Diſmal Effects of it in a Wounded Conſcience.

The

The Saints doubtleſs will look upon this as the moſt Ineſtimable Priviledge; as that, without which 'tis impoſſible to be Eaſie or Happy. How will they Rejoyce and Triumph when they ſhall find in themſelves no Diſpoſition at all to the leaſt Evil, no poſſibility of ever incurring the Guilt of it!

2. As the Bleſſed Spirits will find in themſelves a total freedom from all Sin, ſo they will be abſolutely and perfectly determin'd to every thing that is beſt, always chooſing, approving, and delighting in that which is Good. They will find themſelves entr'd upon a State of Divine Contemplation, Love, and Imitation, being wholly taken up in Adoring the Infinite Perfections of the Divine Nature, and will be ſurpriz'd at thoſe Great and Marvellous Things which God has done for them: They will Obey with Vigor, and Praiſe with Chearfulneſs, and Love without Meaſure, and Truſt without Diſpondency, and Fear without Torment; and all this without any Reluctance, Wearineſs, or Intermiſſion: In a word, they will perceive a Divine Nature wrought in themſelves, that they are like God in point of Purity as well as Immortality: And how Bleſſed, how Infinitely Bleſſed are they who are in ſuch a State!

3. Another great and Eſſential Ingredient of the Happineſs of the Saints departed is this, That they are enter'd into a State of perfect Peace and Friendſhip: They are admitted into the Society of Saints and Angels, where there is no fear, or poſſibility of any future Diſcord and Contention: Where there is no Selfiſhneſs or Envy, no contrary Humours, or divided Intereſts; but all of them Love God above all, and every one loves each other as himſelf. 'Tis the ſence of mutual Friendſhip, which makes this World a tolerable Habitation; and 'tis the ſence of univerſal immutable Friendſhip which will render

der that other World a State of Incomparable Pleaſure and Bleſſedneſs. But,

4. Another Fruit, or Effect of good Works in reſpect of Holy Souls, in their ſtate of ſeparation from their Bodies, may reaſonably be ſuppoſed to be HOPE [Which I the rather mention, becauſe it was the Opinion of many Ancient Fathers of the Church, and is ſince receiv'd by Proteſtants of Eminence and Worth †] By which, they did not underſtand ſuch a Hope, as Men have here upon Earth: a Hope which ebbs and flows, a fluctuating, wavering, inconſtant Hope; founded upon uncertain Opinion, and probable Conjectures, mixt with fear and diffidence, attended with impatience, diſcontent and wearineſs. No, The Hope of the Saints departed this Life, is a firm, ſecure, unſhaken, immutable, certain Hope; without any mixture of ſuſpicion, murmuring or fear of Diſappointment, founded in much clearer Apprehenſions, and larger Communications of God's Love and Favour to them, and aſſurance of their love to Him, than are either vouchſaf'd, or are attainable in this frail Mortal State. The Principal Object of which Hope, or the thing hop'd for, They ſuppoſed, to be the Reſurrection of the Body at the Laſt Day, when they ſhould be admitted to the Beatifick Viſion, in the Higheſt Heaven, the place of the more immediate Reſidence of the Divine Majeſty and Glory: where they ſhould behold God and Chriſt, not κατ' ὀπτασίαν, as ſome of them ſpeak, as in a Viſion, or through a Cloud at a diſtance, *but face to face, as he is*, receiving the fulleſt Communications of his Love and Glory. And this they collected from all thoſe paſſages of Holy Scripture, which ſpeak of the Great and Final Day of Judgment, *as the Greateſt and Joyful Day, the Day of Mercy and Forgiveneſs, Reſt and Refreſhing, Joy and Gladneſs, Redemption and Salvation, Rewards and Crowns.*

† V. *Lud. Capel. de Stat. Anim. poſt mortem.*

And

And indeed, tho' there be no doubt, that the Saints reſt in Hope of a Glorious Reſurrection, and an Immortal Crown, and though from ſuch Texts, it may with great probability be inferr'd, That the Happineſs of departed Souls is but initial and partial, and leſs perfect than it will be at the Reſurrection, and after the Final Judgment, when they ſhall be *Cloathed upon with their Heavenly Houſe, Bodies faſhioned like to Chriſt's moſt Glorious Body*, Yet, with ſubmiſſion, I conceive, ſuch paſſages do not neceſſarily prove, that the Spirits of Juſt Men, are not immediately admitted into Heaven, as it imports not only a State, but a place of Magnificence and Tranſcendent Glory, But ſuppoſe this alone ſhould be the principal part of their Bleſſedneſs, yet even this in the account of every good Man will appear very great, ſuch as exacts our beſt Care and Endeavours to attain to it. To reſt in Hope, a Hope which cannot be diſappointed of a Glorious Reſurrection to an Immortal Crown : To have as it were, the Gliſtering Morning Rays of that Bleſſed Day, breaking in upon them, and to have the proſpect of that Bright Eternal Crown, which at that Day ſhall be ſet upon their Heads, repreſented to them; will fill the Bleſſed Spirits with preſent Exultancie, and Inceſſant Triumph, cauſing them to break out into Halelujahs and Songs of Praiſe *to the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten them again to a lively Hope, by the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptable, and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reſerv'd in Heaven for them.*

1 Pet. 1. 3, 4.

5. Laſtly, The Works of good Men do ſo follow, or accompany them into their Future State, as through the Mercy of God in Chriſt, to procure them an immediate Admittance into Heaven, the Palace of the Great King of the World, a Place of Unſpeakable Majeſty and Glory,

Solace

Solace and Delight, where they are made to Drink of thoſe Rivers of Pleaſure which are at God's Right Hand for evermore. And in this, I think, I ſpeak agreeably to the tenor of Holy Scripture, the more general belief of the Antient, and the ſenſe of the beſt Reform'd Proteſtant Churches, our own Church in particular, which has expreſſly taught us, That †, *Death delivering us from our Bodies, ſends us ſtraight home into our Country, and makes us to dwell preſently with God for ever, in Everlaſting Reſt and Quietneſs.* And again, * *As the Scripture teaches, let us think, that the Soul of Man paſſing out of the Body, goeth ſtraitway either to Heaven or elſe to Hell:* Which Doctrin is grounded upon ſeveral paſſages of the Apoſtle St. *Paul*, the Parable of *Lazarus*, and the example of the Penitent Theif upon the Croſs. But this leads me to the laſt thing I propos'd, *viz.*

† V. *Hom.* againſt the fear of Death.

* V. *Hom.* of Prayer.

3. To touch at the time from whence the Bleſſedneſs of good Men commences: and in this I have already in great meaſure prevented my ſelf, and therefore ſhall be very ſhort upon it. I doubt not therefore, in a word, to affirm that it begins immediately after the diſſolution of Soul and Body. Which whether it may be juſtly infer'd from the particular force of the Greek word ἀναλύειν, which we tranſlate henceforth, I ſhall not now diſpute: For however that be, the thing it ſelf is ſufficiently clear from many other places of Scripture. The whole Scope of the Parable of *Dives* and *Lazarus* is a convincing and undeniable Teſtimony. The Apoſtle St. *Paul* has aſſur'd us, that to depart out of this Life is to be *with Chriſt, and that to be at home in the Body, is to be abſent from the Lord, and to be abſent from the Body, is to be preſent with the Lord.* Which Places are ſo clear, and full to the purpoſe, that more need not be added: And therefore, I ſhall now proceed to the Application of what I have

Luke 16. 19, &c. 1 Phil. 2. 23. 2 Cor. 5. 6, 8.

ſaid, ſo as to influence our general Belief and Practice, and in particular to temper and allay our Grief, which this Melancholy Solemnity is ſo apt to excite in us. And,

1. From what has been ſaid, I might take occaſion to ſhew the groſs abſurdity and falſhood of that conceit which ſome have entertain'd concerning the Sleep of the Soul, as they call it, ſuppoſing it in its ſeparate State intirely bereft, and ſtrip'd of all Vital Energy or Operation: Which how it can be reconcil'd with thoſe Scriptures which aſſert the immediate Bleſſedneſs of the Saints departed, I cannot ſee, unleſs a ſtate of perfect inactivity, and ſtupid ſenſleſſneſs, either is, or may be accounted a Bleſſed State.

2. I might likewiſe repreſent what a direct contradiction the Doctrin of Purgatory, as it is taught in the Church of *Rome*, is to the words of the Text. Says the Text, *Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord:* No, ſays the Church of *Rome*, they are conſign'd for many Years (no body knows how many) to Purgatory, *i. e.* as they explain themſelves to a place whoſe Torments are very exquiſite, little leſs than the pains of Hell, to ſuffer (as they ſpeak) the Temporal Puniſhment of thoſe Sins, for which they have not compleatly ſatisfi'd in this Life. Can an immediate reſt from their Labors, and ſuffering very exquiſite Pains and Torments conſiſt together? And then,

3. From hence alſo, I might ſhew how vain and uſeleſs it is to pray for the Saints who are departed this Life. Their Sins and Sorrows are at an end, They reſt from their Labours, They are Bleſſed, and wherein can our Prayers Profit them? Is it not abſurd to pray for what they already enjoy? Tho' the Words give juſt occaſion to diſcourſe upon all theſe things, yet I ſhall chooſe rather to inſiſt upon what is plainer, and more practical. And therefore,

1. Are

1. Are they who die in the Lord Bleſſed, from hence you ſee the great Neceſſity, the Reaſonableneſs and Advantages of Chriſtian Faith and Practice. What greater Motive and Incouragement to live well, than to be aſſur'd that if we do ſo, we ſhall be happy, by an abundant entrance into the joy of our Lord. *Bleſſed are the Dead*, ſays the Text, but then it is with this Reſtriction, *who die in the Lord.* Which plainly ſhews, that Bleſſedneſs appertains to them, to them alone, excluſively of all others. Unleſs we live the Life of the Righteous, it will be impoſſible for us to die the Death of the Righteous: Unleſs we live to the Lord, reſigning our Selves, Soul, Body and Spirit, intirely to his Will and Pleaſure, we can never die in the Lord, never die in his Favour, nor partake with him in his Glory. The conſtant exerciſe of Faith and good Works, will give us courage and confidence at the time of our diſſolution, and after death alſo. If theſe go before or accompany us, they will aſſure our Hearts, and plead our Cauſe, and through the Merits of Chriſt, procure a full approbation, and an ample reward. But *without Holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* Tribulation, Anguiſh, and Horror, and black invincible Deſpair will be the portion of the Ungodly after their Diſſolution. The end of this life will be to them, the beginning of a life of eternal Miſery and Torment. Impure, wicked Souls, will be ſo far from the end of their Labours, that they will juſt then, enter upon Labours infinitely more vexatious and inſupportable than any they groan'd under in this Life. Their Works, as well as, the Works of the Righteous will follow them into their future State: But for this reaſon to enhance and aggravate their Shame and Miſery. For then the unreaſonableneſs, the folly and turpitude, and

horrid baſeneſs of their behaviour, will be repreſented to their guilty Minds, with ſuch Force and Efficacy, and the impoſſibility of undoing their Evil Deeds, or making any Satisfaction for them, be ſo clearly impreſt upon them, that they will lie down in everlaſting Confuſion, Aſtoniſhment and Deſpair, expecting the Reſurrection of Damnation, and curſing their own obſtinate Folly, as the only cauſe of their ruine. And ſince it is thus, we plainly ſee how much it is our Duty, and our Intereſt, to live in the ſincere Belief and Practice of our Holy Religion, that ſo at the time of our Diſſolution, we may receive the exceeding great, and glorious rewards of it.

Joh. 5. 29.

2. From hence we may draw a very powerful Argument to leſſen our Opinion of this World, and to animate and fortifie us againſt the fear of Death. What is there in this World that we ſhould be over fond of it? What is there in Death that ſhould make us either afraid or unwilling to die? Is not this World a place of Injuſtice and Violence, of Subtiltiy and Deceit, full of noiſe and brawling, of Strife and Contention? Are we not daily expos'd to Detraction and Reproach? The Peeviſhneſs of ſome, the Stubbornneſs of others, the Treachery and Ingratitude of Friends, the Hatred and Injuries of Enemies, the contempt of Superiors, the jealouſie of Equals, the envy of the Meaner ſort, the different Humours, the divided and contrary Intereſts of thoſe we converſe with, do perplex, and almoſt diſtract and confound us: Are not our beſt Counſels too often rejected, our faithfuleſt Reproof ſcorn'd, our well-lay'd Deſigns defeated? Is not every thing ſubject to mutability and a ground of Care and Vexation? And ſince it is thus, ſince this is the State, the Guiſe, and manner of this World, Why do we admire, and dote upon

on it? Why ſo unwilling to leave it? Eſpecially ſince Death will put an everlaſting end to all this Labour and Sorrow, and vexation of Spirit. Can a good Man readily go to a worſe place? Can he loſe by the change of his Habitation? No certiainly! He will be an infinite gainer by it. Death removes him far above, from the *wrath of Man, and the ſtrife of Tongues*: above the Waves and Winds, the Storms and Tempeſts, the Toſſings and Inſtabilities of theſe Lower Regions; out of the reach either of Envy or Malice, Force or Subtilty: It delivers from all the tumult, diſorder and fury, and evil effects either of our own, or other Mens Unreaſonable Appetites or Paſſions. Or, if it ſhould be ſaid, That Death do's deprive us of ſome things, which it muſt be confeſt, in a qualifi'd ſenſe, and in their due place, are valuable Bleſſings, things truly amiable and pleaſant: Yet at the ſame time, it puts us into the Poſſeſſion of greater Good Things, Pleaſures more Manly and Subſtantial, Pure, Unmixt, Durable, Satisfying Pleaſures, ſuitable to our Natures, and commenſurate to the Capacities of our Souls. It tranſmits us to the Society of Saints and Angels, God and Chriſt, who are Friends indeed, Faithful and never failing Friends: fills us with clear and conſtant Impreſſions of God's Love to us, and our Love to God, which is the higheſt pitch of Felicity. Why then do we fear Death, which puts us into the Poſſeſſion of ſo many, ſo great and ineſtimable Priviledges? Why do we not rather, with ſubmiſſion, aſpire after this Happy State? A natural fear of Death, 'tis true, there will be; this is hardly ever totally extirpated in the beſt: But I am ſure the Conſideration of that great Bleſſedneſs, which the Saints enjoy in their future State, immediately upon the Diſſolution of Soul and Body, is ſufficient, to arm and fortifie good Men againſt the

the unreaſonable and immoderate fears of it; and that is the thing I aim at.

3. Laſtly, What has been ſaid is of great force, and ſingular uſe to temper, and mitigate our Sorrow, upon the Death of our Chriſtian Friends. To have little or no concern upon us, upon ſuch ſad Occaſions, is Unnatural, and more than Bruitiſh Stupidity: But to be over concern'd and exceſſive in our Grief is indecent, a thing unbecoming true Chriſtians. It becomes us, it is our Duty to Mourn, but then, we muſt *Mourn as thoſe, which have Hope:* Hope that our Friends are gone to their Reſt, and that we our ſelves, when our appointed time comes, ſhall reſt together with them, in a full aſſurance of a Glorious Reſurrection to an Immortal Crown at the Laſt Day.

Which brings me to the particular Application of what has been ſaid, to allay and mitigate the Sorrow, which this grave and mournful Solemnity excites in us? 'Tis true, we have reaſon to weep for our ſelves, in that we are depriv'd of ſo bright and noble a Pattern of unaffect'd Piety and true Goodneſs, which our Deceas'd Siſter ſet before us. But our Loſs, is her Gain. There's no reaſon to weep upon her account: She is enter'd into her Reſt. Her Sorrows are at an end, and her Joys begun: Joys which are ſatisfying and will be Eternal. This, I ſay, we have great reaſon to believe, as will appear when I have laid ſomething of her true Character before you.

It pleas'd Almighty God, the Wiſe Author of our Beings, to bleſs her with an admirable Sagacity, and quickneſs of Apprehenſion, a diſcerning Mind, and a ſtrong Memory, which together with a ſerious and compoſed frame and temper of Spirit, made her capable of receiving and retaining the wiſeſt and beſt Inſtructions, and

and fitted Her for an unaffected and rational Devotion, and thoſe great Excellencies and Perfections, our Holy Religion was deſign'd to Inſpire and Work in us. Which advantages of nature were very early and happily improv'd by the pious Care of her tender Mother (a Lady of ſingular, I had almoſt ſaid inimitable Vertues) and the joint endeavours of thoſe Incomparable Ladies, the Lady *Nottingham*, and her Siſter the Lady *Mary*, whoſe Memory is Honourable and Precious amongſt all thoſe who had the Honour and Happineſs, to be acquainted with them.

Theſe Excellent Ladies, from her Childhood *Train'd her up in the Way ſhe ſhould go, and in her riper years, ſhe did not depart from it.* Their Firſt and Principal Care, as it ought to be, was to ſow in her Heart the Seeds of an early and ſincere Piety and Devotion towards God: to teach her the true knowledge of God, through Jeſus Chriſt, and her Duty to Him: to Inſpire her with an Awful Regard, to her Great Creator, and Merciful Redeemer, and her Infinite Obligations to them both: and this, before ſhe could receive, or imbibe any Prejudices which might occaſion any averſneſs or diſlike to Religious Meditations, and Exerciſe. Which being done, no Care was wanting, to let her ſoon into the Art of Civility, and all the Decencies of a Graceful and Genteel Behaviour, without any mixture of thoſe Impertinencies and Follies, which too often diſguiſe and ſhelter themſelves under that Amiable Name. The good Effects of which Pious Care and Pains appear'd in her whole Converſation.

As for her Devotion towards God, nothing could be more Regular, Uniform, and Conſtant; both as to her Cloſet Retirements, and Publick Worſhip. Neither Pleaſure nor Buſineſs could hinder it, becauſe to Serve God

God was always her Chief Pleaſure, and Greateſt Buſineſs. Of her due Attendance upon the Publick Worſhip, this is a Remarkable Inſtance, that ſhe was never known to omit any fit opportunity of receiving the Holy Sacrament from the ſixteenth Year of her Age: and would not go out of the World without this *Viaticum*, or as the Ancients ſometimes ſtile it, her φάρμακον ἀθανασίας, or Medicine of Immortality, which ſhe received from the Hands of her truly Honourable Brother, with all becoming Seriouſneſs, Devotion, and Thankfulneſs. Her Devotion was not made up of ſudden Heats and Raptures, Intermiſſions and Pauſes; but was Steady, Judicious, and Rational, and Well Govern'd, free from Oſtentation, Superſtition, and any affected Singularities: Which as it ſhew'd the Soundneſs of her Judgment, ſo it contribut'd to the Eaſe and Comfort of her Life, by delivering her from thoſe Vexatious, Doubts and Fears, and Scruples, which ſo often diſquiet, and torment weaker Minds.

None who knew her, but muſt be ſenſible of the Native Sincerity, great Openneſs, and Honeſt Plainneſs of her Heart: which made her always ſpeak as ſhe thought: which taught her to deſpiſe the Diſſimulation and Flatteries of others, and to abhor the thoughts of Diſſembling with, or Flattering any with whom ſhe Convers'd.

Her Gratitude was Great and Exemplary towards all who had ſhewn any kindneſs to her. Eſpecially towards thoſe, who had charg'd themſelves with the Care of her Education. She was ſo ſenſible of the great Advantages ſhe had receiv'd by it, that whenever ſhe mention'd their Names, which ſhe often did, ſhe did it in ſuch Terms and Expreſſions as imply'd the higheſt Reſpect, Honour, and Love to their Memory.

What

What an Admirable Inſtance was ſhe of a Self-denying Temper! There was no preſent Satisfaction ſo great, which ſhe would not fore-goe, when to do it, would ſerve any Wiſe and better Purpoſe. Tho' ſhe long'd for nothing ſo much as the Enjoyment of her Husband and Children in the privacies of her own Houſe, yet this ſhe declin'd when ſhe was ſenſible ſhe could not gratifie her own Inclinations, without being wanting to an Excellent Young Lady, who was left to her more immediate Care, and who, I doubt not, retains very Grateful Impreſſions of her Love, and owes much, to the Pious and Prudent Example and Inſtructions, which ſhe always laid before her.

What an Illuſtrious and Noble Pattern did ſhe ſet us of a great and generous Contempt of the Vain Pleaſures, and Uſeleſs Divertiſements, Fooliſh Mirth, and Impertinent Recreations, with which Youth is eſpecially Enſnar'd: (which have a tendency to corrupt the Mind, and bewitch and ſteal away the Heart, and often prove of very Fatal Conſequence.) And this when Youth and Opportunity conſpir'd to gratifie her in a high Degree. She was always above them, they were either Inſipid or Diſtaſtful. She aſpir'd chiefly after the Pleaſures of Religion and Vertue, and a good Conſcience, which is a continual Feaſt. Theſe were more charming, ſenſible, and tranſporting Pleaſures. Not that ſhe was Cynical or Moroſe, or an Enemy to the Innocent Pleaſures of Converſation, or Cenſorious of others, who took a greater liberty than ſhe indulg'd to her ſelf. 'Tis true, ſhe was not fond of theſe things, but yet made all reaſonable and fit allowances for others: ſhe ſometimes gave way, but when ſhe did, ſhe kept the Reins in her Hands, and would not be prevail'd with to exceed the bounds of Modeſty and Sobriety.

If we conſider her in her conjugal Relation, I had almoſt apply'd the words of the Wiſe Man, in the Cloſe of that Chapter, which ſhe ſo often made the Subject of her delightful Meditation, and daily Practice: *Many Daughters have done vertuouſly, but thou excelleſt them all.* Never was any Wife, more tenderly Affectionate towards her Husband, and more obſequiouſly Obſervant of him, and rejoyc'd more in him, than ſhe did. She always ſuited her Carriage, with the greateſt Eaſe and Chearfulneſs, to the gravity of his Character and Sacred Function. Nay, ſhe has been often heard to ſpeak of it, as one of the greateſt Bleſſings of her Life, that God in his wiſe and good Providence had ſo order'd it, that ſhe ſhould be a Clergy-man's Wife. And this ſhe did for that very reaſon, for which too many are ſo forward now a-days, to deſpiſe not only our Perſons but our Function: becauſe it might be a check upon her, from that *outward adorning*, as St. *Peter* calls it, *of plaiting the hair, and wearing of gold, and putting on of apparel*, and might be a more particular engagement, to put on that Modeſty, and Gravity, and Sobriety, and Meekneſs, and Spiritual Ornaments, with which the Apoſtle requires the Wives of ſuch, who Miniſter in that Sacred Office, ſhould in a more particular manner Adorn themſelves.

Prov. 31. 29.

As to her Converſation among her Neighbours, they muſt, and I am perſwaded will do her that right, as to teſtifie, that it was very Kind and Courteous towards all, Compaſſionate and Tender-hearted towards them in their diſtreſs. She was faithful in her Friendſhip, unwearied in her Diligence, and prudent in her Conduct; her Speech was Savoury, and Behaviour Graceful: ſhe was an Ornament and a Crown to her Husband, a Bleſſing to her Family, and whole Neighbourhood, and a Pattern to her Sex.

If

If we take a view of her in her laſt lingring, tedious, and oftentimes painful Sickneſs, we have an illuſtrious example of the due Exerciſe of all thoſe Graces and Vertues which are peculiar and proper to ſuch a Condi-on, an invincible patience and fortitude of Mind, attended with a profound and intire Reſignation to the Will of God. She was never heard to complain or murmur: Was eaſie in her ſelf and to thoſe about her, and thankful for the aſſiſtance they gave her. Never expreſt any great deſire of Life. I once heard her ſay, with great modeſty and temper, ſhe ſhould have been glad, if it would have pleas'd God, to have entruſted her with the Education of her dear and hopeful Children, that ſhe might have taken the ſame Pious Care of them, which her Relations and Friends had done of her: however ſhe was content, knowing they were ſafe in the Hands of God, and committed them to his Good Providence, under the pious, affectionate, and prudent Care of her deareſt Husband, of which ſhe was intirely ſatisfy'd. When ſhe had the quickeſt and moſt ſenſible Apprehenſi-ons of Death, ſhe ſaid ſhe was neither afraid, nor unwilling to Die, having nothing upon her Mind to trouble her. How great an argument of Integrity and Innocence! Guilt, if there be any, uſually manifeſting itſelf at ſuch a time, in Perſons of Pious Principles and Education. But ſhe could not charge her ſelf. And it pleas'd our Wiſe and Good God to reward her Innocence with a calm and comfortable Death. It pleas'd him to releaſe her out of the Troubles and Miſeries of this World, the laſt Lord's Day, with great hopes of keeping an Everlaſting Sabbath with Him in that Glory which he has prepar'd for all thoſe who Love Him in Sincerity and Truth.

And thus have I very imperfectly given you ſomething of the Character, and Converſation of that Excellent

Perſon whoſe Remains are here before us. I have not been ſollicitious of any Method, or uſed any Art to deceive, and am perſwaded that nothing but meer Malice can accuſe me of Inſincerity or Flattery: And the ſum of all is this, That our Deceas'd Siſter, was Bleſt with as many truly Noble and Great Accompliſhments, and had as few defects and imperfections as any of her Sex, and muſt be reckon'd amongſt the beſt and brighteſt Patterns of a Refin'd and Exalted Virtue.

And now ſhould not the Conſideration of ſo Early and Exemplary a Piety and true Goodneſs, which made her too good for this World, and qualified her for a better: incline us to wipe our Eyes, at leaſt not to Mourn immoderately at this our Loſs, which is her unſpeakable Gain. If Natural Affection muſt, and will have a vent, yet we muſt govern it by Reaſon and Religion: We muſt remember what great and juſt Grounds we have to believe ſhe died in the Lord, and is *Bleſſed in a reſt from her Labours*, and that the happy Fruits, Effects, and Reward of *her Works follow Her*, and muſt comfort our ſelves with ſuch Conſiderations,

Above all, ſince in the eſtabliſh'd Method of the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs, there's an impoſſibility ſhe ſhould return to us again, let us ſtrive ſo to order our Converſation, that when our appointed time comes, we may go to her, and all our Chriſtian Friends, *to the General Aſſembly of Saints, and Spirits of juſt Men made perfect*, without any future poſſibility of ever parting with them again: and give me leave to ſay, that the beſt and kindeſt thing we can do to the Memory of our departed Friends is to Copy after them, to Tranſcribe their Piety and Goodneſs into our own Practice. To imitate their Virtues is moſt Honourable to them, and Profitable to our ſelves: this ſhews a true Love and Va-

lue

lue for them, and will at length Tranſmit us to them again, where we ſhall partake with them in their Bleſſedneſs. If amongſt them there be τῆς αἰσθήσεως, any ſenſe or knowledge of our Affairs, we can do nothing ſo Grateful, and Delightful to them. By ſo doing we ſtand up in their Room, and ſupply their Places, and preſent and future Generations will call Us, as well as Them Bleſſed; and we ſhall enter into our Reſt, as they have entr'd into theirs, and *be for ever with the Lord.* Amen.

FINIS.

BOOKS

BOOKS Printed for, and Sold by *Thomas Speed*, at the *Three Crowns* near the *Royal-Exchange* in *Corn-hill*.

THE Duties of the Cloſet, being an earneſt Exhortation to private Devotion, 120. Price 1 *s.* 6 *d.*

A Sermon Preach'd before the King at *White-Hall Nov.* 5*th.* 96. By Sir *William Dawes*, Baronet, *D. D.* and Chaplain in Ordinary to his Majeſty. Publiſh'd by his Majeſty's ſpecial Command. The Second Edition *Quarto*, Price 6 *d.*

A Sermon Preach'd before the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor and Aldermen at *Guild-Hall* Chappel, on Sunday, *April* the 11*th.* By Sir *William Dawes*, Baronet, *D. D.* and Chaplain in Ordinary to his Majeſty, *Quarto.* Price 6 *d.*

A Sermon at the Funeral of Mrs. *Elizabeth Fiſher*, Siſter to the Honourable Sir *William Dawes*, Baronet, *D. D.* And Wife to the Reverend Dr. *Peter Fiſher*, Preach'd at *Bennington* in *Hertfordſhire. June* 2*d.* 1698. By *William Milner*, Vicar of *Shiphall* in *Hertfordſhire. Quarto.* Price 6*d.*

Of the Happineſs of the Saints in Heaven: A Sermon Preach'd before the Queen at *White-Hall*, *October* the 12*th.* 90. By *William Beveridge*, *D. D.* Rector of St. *Peters Cornhill.* The Third Edition, *Quarto.* Price 6*d.*

A Sermon at the Funeral of the Reverend Mr. *Thomas Grey*, Late Vicar of *Dedham* in *Eſſex*; Preach'd in the Pariſh Church of *Dedham*, *Feb.* 2d. 92. With a ſhort Account of his Life, By *Joſeph Powel*, *M. A.* Rector of St. *Mary* on the *Wall* in *Colcheſter*, *Quarto.* Price Six-Pence.

The Death of Good Joſiah *Lamented.* A Sermon occaſion'd by the Death of our late moſt Gracious Sove-

raign

287839